(a) what is the basis for recent fixation of the natural gas price whether coal equivalent and furnace oil cost has been taken to be equivalent to natural gas cost;

(b) what are the international standards for the fixation of natural gas prices and why India differs from them, and in what respect;

(c) whether any special consideration is made for the supply of gas to backward areas and also to Government undertakings like Electricity Boards etc.;

(d) what was the profit of ONGC during the last three years and what is the anticipation in the current year on the basis of new price structure; and

(e) whether recent price fixation is opposed by individuals, institutions or Government; if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) The price of natural gas has been fixed in such a manner as to encourage the use of gas, bring down flaring and at the same time provide a reasonable return on gas exploration, production and transportation.

(b) There are no fixed international standards for fixation of natural gas price and these vary from country to country.

(c) Concessions have been provided for the consumers in the North Eastern region and to fall back users and those getting gas from fields under development.

(d) The details are as follows:

Year	Profit in Rs./Cr.
1983-84	804.66
1984-85	882.41
1985-86	1302.21

ONGC has been accounting the sale price of gas on realised basis. It is, therefore, too early to anticipate any changes in profit due to the new price structure in the current year.

(e) Some consumers have represented against the prices fixed and have requested for lower prices.

LPG Connections to the Consumers of Fazilka

82. SHRI M. KADHARSHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of LPG connections allotted for the LPG consumers at Fazilka, the number of connections actually released so far, and the number of applicants awaiting release of such connections and by when the shortfall in releasing these connections is likely to be met;

(b) whether it is a fact that M/s. Hindustan Petroleum Corporation have stopped allotment of new LPG connections in Fazilka in Punjab, if so, what are the reasons therefor and by when Government propose to start releasing of new LPG connections in Fazilka;

(c) the average demand of LPG refills in Fazilka during the last six months, the number of LPG refills actually released to the consumers during the same period;

(d) what is the present supply position of the refills in Fazilka; and

(e) by when M/s. HPC Limited propose to start issuing the second LPG cylinders at Fazilka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) There is one LPG distributor functioning in Fazilka with a consumer population of 3049 as on 28.2.1987. 1070 applications are pending with the distributor which are likely to be released by June, 1987, in a phased manner.

(b) Owing to heavy backlog in supply of refills in the State, the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation had temporarily suspended release of new LPG connections in December, 1986. The release has since been resumed in the Punjab, including Fazilka.

(c) The average demand and supply of LPG refills in Fazilka during the last six months was around 2240 and 2000 cylinders per month respectively.

(d) The present supply position in Fazilka is comfortable.

(e) The Corporation expects to release second cylinders in Fazilka in the third quarter of 1987-88.

Price of Crude in International Market

83. SHRI D. B. CHANDRE GOWDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of crude in the international market is firming up;

(b) whether it is also a fact that India has to pay nearly Rs. 4800 crore on import of oil and petroleum products during the next financial year;

(c) whether Government will bear such a heavy burden;

(d) whether Government propose to intensify indigenous production of crude than the imports; and

(e) if so, the reaction of Government thereto in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In view of the fluctuating market, it is too early to estimate at this stage the size of the import bill for the next financial year.

(d) and (e) The steps taken to increase the production of crude oil in the country and to minimise the import bill include intensification of exploration, use of enhanced recovery techniques, induction of advanced technology and purchase of crude oil and petroleum products at the most favourable terms.

Export of drugs

84. SHRI MAHENDRA PRASAD: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any fresh steps have been taken to boost the export of drugs; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) whether under these measures permission for manufacturing the drugs which have not yet been cleared for marketing in India but are being marketed in other countries has been given for export purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS AND PETRO-CHEMICALS IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY (SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH):